

REMARKS

Claims 1-14 are pending. By this Amendment, claim 1 is amended. No new matter is presented.

Claims 1-14 Recite Patentable Subject Matter

Claims 1, 6, and 11-14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by United States Patent Number 5,100,189 to Futamata et al. (hereinafter "Futamata"). Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

Pending claim 1 of the application recites an impact reduction vehicle bumper system including at least two frame rails, with at least two brackets coupled respectively to the at least two frame rails. A beam is attached to the at least two brackets and a plate member is attached to the beam. At least two frame rail extensions are coupled to the at least two brackets. Each bracket of the at least two brackets is disposed between and directly connected to a first longitudinal end face of a corresponding frame rail of the at least two frame rails and either one of a first longitudinal end face and a second longitudinal end face of the beam. The first and second longitudinal end faces of the beam are parallel relative to a longitudinal axis of each frame rail extension while the first longitudinal end face of each frame rail is orthogonal relative to the longitudinal axis of the frame rail.

Applicants enclose herein schematic diagram A which illustrates the claimed feature of each bracket being provided between and directly contacting a first longitudinal end face of a corresponding frame rail and a longitudinal end face of the beam. The recited feature is clearly shown in Figures 2-3 and 5 of the originally filed application.

Futamata does not disclose or suggest each bracket of the at least two brackets being disposed between and directly connected to a first longitudinal end face of a corresponding frame rail of the at least two frame rails and either one of a first longitudinal end face and a second longitudinal end face of the beam. Rather, as shown in schematic diagram B enclosed herein, Futamata clearly discloses the bracket 5 being disposed on or offset from a longitudinal side surface (i.e., not an end face) of the frame rail 1 and intermediate the end faces of the beam 6. In fact, the bracket 5 is connected to a longitudinal inner side surface of the beam 6 and not the longitudinal end face of the beam 6. Also, see column 3, lines 23-28 and Figures 3-4 of Futamata.

Put simply, the bracket 5 of Futamata is not disposed or provided so as to be between and directly contacting a longitudinal end face of frame rail 1 and a longitudinal end face of the beam 6. Instead, Futamata clearly and unambiguously discloses the bracket 5 being on an inner side surface of the frame rail 1 and directly contacts an intermediate portion of an inner side surface of the beam 6.

To qualify as prior art under 35 U.S.C. § 102, a single reference must teach, i.e., identically describe, each feature of a rejected claim. As explained above, Futamata does not disclose or suggest each and every feature of pending claim 1. Therefore, pending claim 1 is not anticipated by or rendered obvious in view of Futamata. Accordingly, claim 1 should be deemed allowable.

Claims 2-14 depend from claim 1. It is respectfully submitted that these thirteen claims be deemed allowable for the at least the same reasons as claim 1, as well as for the additional subject matter recited therein.

Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection.

Claims 1, 6, and 11-14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by United States Patent Number 6,398,275 to Hartel et al. (hereinafter "Hartel"). Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

Pending claim 1 of the application recites an impact reduction vehicle bumper system including at least two frame rails, with at least two brackets coupled respectively to the at least two frame rails. A beam is attached to the at least two brackets and a plate member is attached to the beam. At least two frame rail extensions are coupled to the at least two brackets. Each bracket of the at least two brackets is disposed between and directly connected to a first longitudinal end face of a corresponding frame rail of the at least two frame rails and either one of a first longitudinal end face and a second longitudinal end face of the beam. The first and second longitudinal end faces of the beam are parallel relative to a longitudinal axis of each frame rail extension while the first longitudinal end face of each frame rail is orthogonal relative to the longitudinal axis of the frame rail.

Applicants enclose herein schematic diagram A which illustrates the claimed feature of each bracket being provided between and directly contacting a first longitudinal end face of a corresponding frame rail and a longitudinal end face of the beam. The recited feature is clearly shown in Figures 2-3 and 5 of the originally filed application.

Hartel does not disclose or suggest each bracket of the at least two brackets being disposed between and directly connected to a first longitudinal end face of a corresponding frame rail of the at least two frame rails and either one of a first longitudinal end face and a second longitudinal end face of the beam. Rather, the

“brackets” 1, 2 (i.e., crash box and mounting plate assembly) is connected to an end of the spacer stay 22 (i.e., frame rail extension) and an inner side surface of the transverse beam 5. Put simply, the “brackets” 1, 2 are not connected to a longitudinal end face of the beam as the “brackets” 1, 2 are instead connected to a longitudinal side surface of the transverse beam 5.

To qualify as prior art under 35 U.S.C. § 102, a single reference must teach, i.e., identically describe, each feature of a rejected claim. As explained above, Hartel does not disclose or suggest each and every feature of pending claim 1. Therefore, pending claim 1 is not anticipated by or rendered obvious in view of Hartel. Accordingly, claim 1 should be deemed allowable.

Claims 2-14 depend from claim 1. It is respectfully submitted that these thirteen claims be deemed allowable for the at least the same reasons as claim 1, as well as for the additional subject matter recited therein.

Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection.

Claims 2-5 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being anticipated by Hartel, as applied to claim 1 above, and further in view of the well known prior art. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

Hartel is discussed above. The Office Action admits that Hartel does not disclose the plate member, beam, brackets, and frame rail extensions being made specifically of steel. Accordingly, the Office Action states that making bumpers out of steel is well known in the art and that it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to make the Hartel components out of steel.

Applicants respectfully submit that the applied “well known prior art” is not identified for providing features that overcome the above-described deficiency in Hartel, that is, Hartel’s failure to disclose or suggest each bracket of the at least two brackets being disposed between and directly connected to a first longitudinal end face of a corresponding frame rail of the at least two frame rails and either one of a first longitudinal end face and a second longitudinal end face of the beam.

To establish *prima facie* obviousness of a claimed invention, all of the features recited by the rejected claim must be taught or suggested by the applied art of record. See M.P.E.P. § 2143.03. Applicants respectfully submit that Hartel and the “well known prior art,” either alone or in combination, do not teach or suggest each and every feature recited by pending claims 2-5. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit claims 2-5 are not rendered obvious in view of Hartel and the “Well known prior art” and should be deemed allowable for their dependency on allowable claim 1, as well as the additional subject matter recited therein.

Withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

Claims 7-8 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being anticipated by Hartel, as applied to claim 1 above, and further in view of United States Patent Number 4,422,680 to Goupy. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

Hartel is discussed above. Goupy does not disclose or suggest each bracket of at least two brackets being disposed between and directly connected to a first longitudinal end face of a corresponding frame rail of at least two frame rails and either one of a first longitudinal end face and a second longitudinal end face of the beam. See

Figure 1 of Goupy. Put simply, Goupy does not overcome the above-described drawback of Hartel.

To establish *prima facie* obviousness of a claimed invention, all of the features recited by the rejected claim must be taught or suggested by the applied art of record. See M.P.E.P. § 2143.03. Applicants respectfully submit that Hartel and Goupy, either alone or in combination, do not teach or suggest each and every feature recited by pending claims 7-8. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit claims 7-8 are not rendered obvious in view of Hartel and Goupy and should be deemed allowable for their dependency on allowable claim 1, as well as the additional subject matter recited therein.

Withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

Claims 9-10 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being anticipated by Futamata, as applied to claim 1 above, and further in view of United States Patent Number 5,803,514 to Shibuya et al. (hereinafter "Shibuya"). Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

Futamata is discussed above. Shibuya does not disclose or suggest each bracket of at least two brackets being disposed between and directly connected to a first longitudinal end face of a corresponding frame rail of at least two frame rails and either one of a first longitudinal end face and a second longitudinal end face of the beam. See Figure 1 of Shibuya. Put simply, Shibuya does not overcome the above-described drawback of Futamata.

To establish *prima facie* obviousness of a claimed invention, all of the features recited by the rejected claim must be taught or suggested by the applied art of record.

See M.P.E.P. § 2143.03. Applicants respectfully submit that Futumata and Shibuya, either alone or in combination, do not teach or suggest each and every feature recited by pending claims 9-10. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit claims 9-10 are not rendered obvious in view of Futumata and Shibuya and should be deemed allowable for their dependency on allowable claim 1, as well as the additional subject matter recited therein.

Withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, reconsideration of the application, withdrawal of the outstanding rejections, allowance of claims 1-14, and the prompt issuance of a Notice of Allowability are respectfully solicited.

Should the Examiner believe anything further is desirable in order to place this application in better condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

In the event this paper is not considered to be timely filed, the Applicants respectfully petition for an appropriate extension of time. Any fees for such an extension, together with any additional fees that may be due with respect to this paper, may be charged to counsel's Deposit Account No. 01-2300, **referencing docket number 105450-00009.**

Respectfully submitted,
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Enclosure: Schematic Diagrams A & B

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